DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 070 544 RC 006 616

AUTHOR	Berendzen, Harry
TITLE	The First Indian Bilingual Projects, Title VII Meeting: A Report.
INSTITUTION	Utah Univ., Salt Lake City.
SPONS AGENCY	Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	7p.; Report on Indian Bilingual Projects meeting, Denver, Colo., February 22-23, 1972
JOURNAL CIT	Language in American Indian Education, Spring 1972
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indians; *Bilingual Education; Community Involvement; *Educational Programs; *Evaluation; Instructional Materials; Instructional Staff; Language Ability; *Navaho; Objectives; Small Group Instruction

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the First Indian Bilingual Projects, Title VII Meeting was to discuss experiences and exchange ideas on the development of evaluation design and measurable objectives, the involvement of parents and community, and the development of materials. Sessions were held on unobtrusive measures, measuring language dominance, parent and community involvement, small group instruction for the classroom, and materials development. Suggestions included that at least 2 meetings be held per year; that the entire project staff be given an opportunity for input and agreement in the area of evaluation; that more community members be present for future meetings; that native speakers be trained to become bilingual teachers; and that presentation, display, and demonstration of project-developed materials be a major part of future meetings. (PS)

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LANGUAGE IN AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION

ED 070544

A Newsletter of the Office of
Education Programs
Bureau of Indian Affairs
United States Department of the Interior

UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

William R. Slager, Editor
Betty M. Madsen, Assistant Editor

SPRING 1972

RC 006616

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	v
Introduction	vii
THE LANGUAGE OF THE SIOUX, by William K. Powers	1
INDIAN BILINGUAL PROGRAMS	23
The Title VII Bilingual Education Project at Loneman Day School in Oglala, South Dakota	23
The Title I Bilingual Education Program in the Bethel Agency, Juneau Area, Alaska	29
TESTING LANGUAGE SKILLS, by John W. Oller, Jr.	39
COMMON ERRORS IN CONSTRUCTING MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS, by John W. Oller, Jr.	61
THE LANGUAGE OF TESTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN, by Graeme D. Kennedy	69
INFORMATION EXCHANGE: REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS	
The First Indian Bilingual Projects Title VII Meeting: A Report, by Harry Berendzen	87
Yakima Curriculum Units, by Dale Otto	93
English Language Testing Project at USC	94
Annual Convention of TESOL	95
Announcements in Brief	
An Annotated Bibliography of Young People's Fiction on American Indians (Curriculum Bulletin Number Eleven), compiled by J. M. Graustein and C. L. Jaglinsky	97
Tests of English as a Second Language	98
A New Navajo Course at the University of Utah	98
Courses in Indian Languages at Brigham Young University	99

THE FIRST INDIAN BILINGUAL PROJECTS, TITLE VII MEETING: A REPORT

by

Harry Berendzen

It is with a great deal of enthusiasm and appreciation that we commend the U.S. Office of Education, Program Branch Officers of Title VII, Bilingual Education for having the ability to be flexible, innovative and able to inspire their education programs to new heights of enthusiasm. The ability to inspire and to bring a positive note for change in education is not always the result of U.S.O.E. meetings. In times past, meetings on accountability and programming have not only discouraged but left many project participants with anything but enthusiasm. It is for these reasons that Dr. Dorothy Waggoner and Margaret Van Naerssen are to be commended, for they saw the need for an all Indian Bilingual Projects meeting, which as a first, was designed to meet the very unique needs of Indian language projects. The meeting was held in Denver, Colorado, February 22nd and 23rd, with sixteen Indian Bilingual Projects represented. Participant roles were listed as Directors, Evaluators, Chairman of a Tribal Corporation, Assistant Directors, Interim Director, Linguist, Consultants from Universities, School Board Member, Cultural Specialists, Media Specialist, Teacher Aide, Title VII Coordinators (SEA), Auditor, Curriculum Developer, Community Representatives, Committee Members, University Without Walls, Center for In-Service Education, Teacher, and Curriculum Coordinator. They represented Indians from Alaska to Maine and Montana to New Mexico.

The purpose, according to the Office of Education, was a chance to get together to discuss experiences and exchange ideas on the development of evaluation design and measurable objectives, the

involvement of parents and community, and the development of materials.

Dr. Albar Peña, Title VII Director, indicated in a speech at the 1972 TESOL meeting in Washington that the evaluation design for present bilingual projects funded by U.S O.E. is primarily for the sake of good management of the project. For such an innovative project as bilingual instruction to succeed, it is absolutely important to write objectives, to change them when they are no longer able to be obtained, and generally to write them in a realistic sense. The Denver conference gave participants the opportunity to write objectives that would be realistic and measurable. There was a positive note and a helpful reminder of their importance. Project personnel were asked to indicate how the goals of their program (objectives), which they and parents and community advisors had established, could best be phrased in measurable terms, thus becoming a tool for the good management of each project.

"Unobtrusive measures! What means other than standardized tests are you using," was the subject of a session led by Wayne Newell, Project Director of Calais, Maine (Passamaquoddy). Some examples were: checking voluntary response of children, daily log by teachers, written responses from participants in workshops, how the children dress, asking questions for response from Indian parents and teachers, Indian teacher having child tell story in Indian, then child is to tell story to ESL teacher in English, and many more.

A session on measuring language dominance was led by Gary Holthaus, Project Director, Anchorage, Alaska (Yuk language). Some general conclusions were that a survey should be taken before the beginning of a project. If there is no solid language base, then it would be impossible to build the perceptual base, thus no reason for a bilingual project. One suggestion of criteria for determining language dominance was stated as follows: "He speaks it (Indian language), he understands it, we think he understands it better than English." Participants suggested that home visit surveys be conducted by teachers; however, one comment was that Anglo teachers are not able to determine language dominance. The survey should be made by teachers who speak the Indian language, using the above criteria.

A very good session on parent and community involvement was led by Carla Fielder, Project Director, Loneman School, Pine Ridge, South Dakota (Lakota-Sioux). A monthly news letter, parental participation in classroom instruction, community meeting and community evaluation of the bilingual project were part of the

suggestions and discussion. A conclusion agreed to by all participants was that each project must have community support and participation to succeed. The Indians of each community are really the experts in their own language. Also, what the Indians would call self-determination in the education of their children is something all communities would support. For the most part we see P.T.A.'s, P.T.O's, etc., that are really token organizations for parental participation.

"Small Group Instruction for the Classroom", as an alternative for a class with mixed abilities and an alternative to the American Indian student having to perform before a whole class, was presented by Dr. Charles Herbert, Project Director, Title VII, San Bernardino, California, (Spanish). The use of a tape-recorded story, videotaped session, 16 mm film, and task card preparation were given as suggestions of how to work in small groups. Participants were given the opportunity to actually work with each of these tools in a small group working session. Children learning from other children was also given as a part of the rationale for working in small groups.

The materials development session was a source of real interest and enthusiasm. Mr. Lynn Lee, Project Director, Blanding, Utah, (Navajo), explained to the group how they had produced an animated film on The Coyote Tales with a Navajo sound track. This film and future productions are available for a nominal rental fee. [See Newsletter, Winter, 1972]. All projects displayed materials throughout the two days, as well as demonstrating and explaining project produced materials during a special session. The positive note of enthusiasm was interest and desire to do the same.

Suggestions for future all Indian Bilingual Meetings: First, I would suggest that at least two meetings, similar to the Denver meeting, be sponsored by the U.S. Office of Education, during the grant period (each year). I would suggest that each project write this in as a budget item. It would be a cheap investment for great returns.

In the area of evaluation, it should be explained that at present the writing of measurable product and process objectives is primarily for the purpose of good management. The entire project staff, along with teachers and school administration should have an opportunity for input and agreement. Project personnel should be reminded that objectives can and should be revised as the program develops. Of the most urgent importance is clearly defined lines of supervision and authority. Who answers to whom? Who must be informed? How can better lines of communication and roles be established? This should be presented as a positive approach

to an operation, that is not simply to become another program but one that really changes the instructional program of a school. I emphasize that accountability can be presented, not as a threat, but as a positive tool for a smooth operation. Hopefully as bilingual programs progress the evaluation of the educational process and its accomplishments might become a reality. At present we are operating on assumptions.

All are aware of the importance of community participation and support. It really is the Indian who is the expert in his language and it is the Indian parent, being the prime educator, who must be involved in the planning and implementation of a bilingual program. A very small percentage of the participants represented Indian communities and parents. More should be present for future meetings and more should become part of the official program. John Woodenlegs, community representative and culture specialist for the Cheyenne Indians, was invited to give the closing remarks. His remarks might have appropriately become the keynote address for the meeting.

Staff Development is a major concern of all projects. Dr. Waggoner used the occasion to begin a survey of staff development in the present bilingual programs. Some input came from the Center for In-Service Education of Loveland, Colorado. Also a representative from the University Without Walls, of Yellow Springs, Ohio, was present. What is unique to Indian language projects is what was so succinctly said by Dr. Wayne Holm, Principal of Rock Point School, Arizona, when he stated in a paper delivered at 1971 TESOL Conference in New Orleans that,

> Our thesis, bluntly put, is that it is easier to learn education than it is to learn Navajo. It is easier for alert concerned high school graduates who already know Navajo to learn something of the relatively little we know about the teaching of initial reading and mathematics than it is for college-trained non-Navajos to learn Navajo.

We have few Indian teachers, who speak the language and have the educational knowledge. We also know from experience that few colleges and universities are willing to leave their "hallowed walls," to think of the education of teachers in a new way. We must train native speakers to become bilingual teachers. We must give them career opportunities in the teaching profession. We must by the same token make them proud of their own heritage while giving them self-determination in the education of their children. Perhaps an all Indian bilingual conference in the future might explore these possibilities. Maybe the University Without

Walls, the Center for In-Service Education, C.O.P., or Teacher Corps could provide some ideas or options.

Materials Development was a highlight of the Denver meeting and while the Office of Education must be commended, we ask that a means of sharing materials be developed. We would also suggest that presentation, display and demonstration of project developed materials be a major part of future meetings. Some thought should be given to the collection of these materials for distribution and preservation.

In 1969 the U.S. Office of Education funded four Indian bilingual projects under Title VII. Five more were funded in 1970, and an additional seven in 1971. All are for the most part highly experimental in nature, with many very unique problems. To say that any one program has been an easy, smooth operation is to understate the issue, rather to see people struggle, working together, proud of their language and culture and all to create in their children a better self-image and a more meaningful education is the issue. We would have to conclude that bilingual programs are approaching these goals.